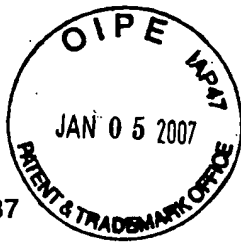


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AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A biodegradable fibrous support for soil mulching comprising a fibrous mass and ~~of the soil, characterized in that it further contains~~ biodegradable thermobonding fibres distributed in the fibrous mass ~~of the said fibrous support.~~

2. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the thermobonding fibres consist exclusively of polylactic fibres.

3. (original) A support according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the thermobonding are present in an amount ~~fibre represent~~ between 5 to 50% by weight, ~~advantageously between 10 to 15% by weight of the support.~~

4. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that it is provided with~~ further comprising a grid associated with at least a part of the support, wherein the grid includes threads comprised ~~, which is either maintained on the whole or part of at least one face of the support, or incorporated into the whole or part of the mass of the support, said grid being produced~~ of a biodegradable polymer selected ~~polymers chosen~~ from the group consisting of ~~comprising~~ polylactic acid, polycaprolactone, viscose, modified viscose, polyhydroxybutyrate, and polyhydroxyalcanoate, ~~by themselves or as a mixture~~ and mixtures thereof.

5. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 4, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the grid consists ~~is made exclusively~~ of modified viscose threads.

6. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 4, wherein characterized in that the weight of the grid is between 10 and 50 g/m², advantageously in the order of 20 g/m².

7. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 4, wherein characterized in that the grid is positioned exclusively in an the area of the fixing points of the support on the ground.

8. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 4, wherein characterized in that the grid is glued directly on the a surface of the fibrous support by means of a water-resistant biodegradable glue which is selected chosen from the group comprising consisting of ethylene polyvinyl alcohol (EVOH), and polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), by themselves or as a mixture and mixtures thereof, the glue being present in an amount representing between 5 and 50%, advantageously 15 %, by weight of the grid.

9. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 4, wherein characterized in that the grid is positioned unrolled directly on the fibrous mass of the support during its manufacture.

10. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 1, which further comprises characterized in that it contains a hydrophobic resin representing from 0.5 in an amount from 0.5 to 15% by weight of the support, wherein the hydrophobic resin is at least one selected chosen from the group consisting of comprising urea-formaldehyde resins, melamine-formaldehyde resins, polyamide-amine-epichlorhydrin resins, polyethyleneimine resins, starch derivatives, by themselves or as a mixture and mixtures thereof.

11. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 1, which further comprises characterized in that it contains carbon black representing from 0.5 in an amount from 0.5 to 4% by weight of the support.

12. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 1, which further comprises a coating which is a dried residue of ~~characterized in that it is coated with an~~ aqueous solution comprising from 5 to 50% by weight of biodegradable natural latex obtained from ~~the~~ rubber tree, the balance to 100 % consisting of water, and agents stabilizing and preserving agents for the ~~said~~ latex.

13. (original) A support according to Claim 1, which further comprises a coating which is a dried residue of ~~characterized in that it is coated with an~~ aqueous solution comprising from 5 to 50% by weight of biodegradable prevulcanized natural latex obtained from ~~the~~ a rubber tree, the balance to 100 % consisting of water, and agents stabilizing and preserving agents for the ~~said~~ latex.

14. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ biodegradable natural latex ~~used~~ is obtained from *Hevea Brasiliensis* and has a dry rubber concentration at least of 60%.

15. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ stabilizing agents are selected ~~chosen~~ from the group consisting of ~~comprising the~~ vegetable proteins, ~~such as especially casein, soya protein, the fillers such as tale, calcium carbonate, by themselves or as a mixture~~ and mixtures thereof.

16. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ preservative agents are selected ~~chosen~~ from the group consisting of ~~comprising the~~ animal proteins, ~~such as glycerine, but also the tannins, especially that of mimosa, the natural colouring agents, indigo, the chitosan by themselves or as a mixture~~ and mixtures thereof

17. (currently amended) A support according to Claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ coating solution contains by weight of:

from 5 to 50 % biodegradable natural latex obtained from the rubber tree,

from 1 to 20 % proteins,
from 0 to 20 % of talc,
from 1 to 20 % of chitosan, and/or indigo, and/or glycerin, and/or tannins,
the balance to 100 % consisting of water.

18. (currently amended) Support according to Claim 1, wherein the fibrous mass comprises, exclusive of ~~characterized in that, before the incorporation of the~~ biodegradable thermobonding fibres, ~~the fibre composition of the support is as follows:~~ from 40 to 100% by weight of coniferous unbleached or bleached kraft fibres, and from 0 to 60% by weight of deciduous unbleached or bleached kraft fibres.

19. (currently amended) Support according to Claim 1, wherein the fibrous mass comprises, exclusive of ~~characterized in that, before the incorporation of the~~ biodegradable thermobonding fibres, ~~the fibre composition of the support is as follows:~~ from 80 to 100% by weight of annual plant fibres, and from 0 to 20% by weight of coniferous unbleached or bleached kraft fibres.

20. (currently amended) Support according to Claim 1, wherein the fibrous mass comprises, exclusive of ~~characterized in that, before the incorporation of the~~ biodegradable thermobonding fibres, ~~the fibre composition of the support is as follows:~~ from 20 to 100% by weight of coniferous bleached kraft fibres, from 0 to 40% by weight of annual plant fibres, and from 0 to 40% by weight of rayon fibres.

21. (new) A support according to Claim 3, wherein the thermobonding fibres are present in an amount between 10 and 15% by weight of the support.

22. (new) A support according to claim 4, wherein the grid is associated with at least a part of at least one support face of the support.

23. (new) A support according to claim 22, wherein the grid is associated with the whole of the at least one support face of the support.

24. (new) A support according to claim 4, wherein the grid is incorporated into at least a part of the support.

25. (new) A support according to claim 24, wherein the grid is incorporated into the whole of the support.

26. (new) A support according to Claim 6, wherein the weight of the grid is about 20 g/m².

27. (new) A support according to Claim 15, wherein the stabilizing agent comprises casein, soya protein, talc or calcium carbonate.

28. (new) A support according to Claim 16, wherein the preservative agent comprises glycerin or indigo.

29. (new) A support according to Claim 8, wherein the glue is present in an amount of about 15% by weight of the grid.